

800 Lincoln Square
121 So. 13th Street
P.O. Box 82028
Lincoln, NE 68501-2028

**HARDING
& SHULTZ**
P.C., L.L.O.

firm@hslegalfirm.com
www.hslegalfirm.com
402.434.3000
Fax 402.434.3030

January 12, 2015

BY EMAIL

55659-1

Nebraska Real Estate Commission
Attn: Greg Lemon, Director
1200 N St., Ste. 402
Lincoln, NE 68508

RE: **2015 Legal Services**

Dear Commissioners and Director Lemon:

As most of you are aware, each year our firm evaluates and adjusts our hourly rates for shareholders, associates, legal assistants and law clerks. We do this primarily to address the increased cost of doing business. Each year our business expenses increase, including personnel, rent, health insurance and other overhead costs.

We are mindful of the Commission's budget and we know legal expenses are not an insignificant part of your budget. Unfortunately, neither we nor the Commission have control over whether a licensee commits a violation or contests a charge. Whenever possible, we attempt to provide the Commission with the best representation at the lowest possible blended hourly rate by utilizing associates and paralegals.

When we evaluate our rates, our firm's Finance Committee makes recommendations to its Board of Directors. The Finance Committee and Board of Directors consider such factors as experience, overhead, area of practice, competency and market forces in the geographic area. In determining whether to adjust an attorney's hourly rate, we always consider whether the proposed hourly rate is within the prevailing market rate in the geographic area. Our firm's annual review of hourly rates is performed with a view toward setting rates for each attorney, legal assistant and law clerk at a level which will allow the firm to be profitable while, at the same time, providing quality service to the client at an hourly rate competitive with rates charged by other attorneys in the same practice and geographic area.

We have historically provided our services to the Commission at a 10% discount to our standard rate. This arrangement grew out of a hand-shake agreement between Chairman Gale, former Director Tyrell and our firm. Providing a discounted rate is not common for our firm, but we value our relationship with the Commission and intend to provide the discounted rate in 2015. Below are our current Commission rates, proposed Commission rates for 2015 and our standard 2015 rates:

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	Current 2014 Discounted Hourly Rate	Proposed 2015 Discounted Hourly Rate*	Standard Hourly Rate 2015 (non-Commission clients)
Shareholders			
Chris Heinrich	\$240	\$250	\$275
Greg Barton	\$240	\$245	\$270
John Bergmeyer	\$240	\$250	\$275
Timothy Engler	\$255	\$255	\$285
Jerry Pigsley	\$240	\$250	\$275
Adam Prochaska	\$215	\$225	\$250
Jack Shultz	\$250	\$255	\$285
Wes Goranson	\$130	\$130	\$145
Associates			
Kelly Ekeler	\$160	\$165	\$185
Paralegals	\$105	\$105	\$115
Law Clerks	\$90	\$90	\$100

*The proposed hourly rate is computed by reducing the standard hourly rate by 10% and rounding to the nearest \$5.00 increment using standard rules of rounding.

We strive to provide superior quality legal services for our clients at competitive prices. If you compare our rate to other comparable firms in Lincoln, I am confident you will find our rates very competitive, and our rates are materially lower than comparable firms in Omaha. I look forward to meeting with you during the Commission meeting in January. In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me. Thanks again for the opportunity to represent the Commission.

Sincerely,

HARDING & SHULTZ, P.C., L.L.C.


Christopher R. Heinrich
cheinrich@hslegalfirm.com

CRH/tlw

cc: Greg Barton
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